



### **Summary from Discussion Group 4** **Proposal to Form a Field Research Advisory Committee**

In the town hall meeting held previously, Dr. Perlin was asked how the Associate Chiefs of Staff for Research and Development (ACOS/R&D) might have a meaningful role in strategic planning for the VA research program. The ACOS/R&D have extensive institutional memory regarding the program and would like to engage in meaningful discussion with VACO staff about the direction the program will go in, now and in the future.

Dr. Perlin responded that he welcomes meaningful input and contact from the field, and challenged the group to think about a process to facilitate meaningful discussion. Discussion Group 4 was formed in response to this challenge and consisted of approximately half the meeting participants.

This discussion group focused on the method of facilitating ongoing communication and proposed the formation of a Field Research Advisory Committee (FRAC) to serve as a channel for ongoing communication between the field and VACO staff.

The proposed FRAC would:

- Consist of the following VACO staff:

Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO);  
Deputy CRADO; and  
Directors of the four research services (BLR&D, RR&D, HSR&D, and CSR&D).

- Consist of the following field research staff:

Five ACOS/R&D – one from each of the five geographic regions recognized by the Office of Research Oversight (ORO), to be elected by their peers; and

The following additional field representatives, also to be elected by their peers within the subset they would represent:

One director of a Rehabilitation R&D Center of Excellence;

One director of a Health Services R&D Center of Excellence;  
One principal investigator (PI) from among PIs of Cooperative Studies; and  
One non-clinician Ph.D. scientist from among all Research Career Scientists and Senior Research Career Scientists.

- Be elected for 3-year terms, with one-third of the field membership to rotate off annually.
- Meet on a quarterly basis, with minutes published for distribution to the field.

The group further proposed that the FRAC be charged with promoting communication and providing input on issues that impact research, and participating in current operations and strategic planning.

In order to facilitate better communication among ACOS/R&D, a quarterly conference call should be held prior to each quarterly meeting in order to vet issues. The five ACOS/R&D representatives to the committee would be responsible for establishing and maintaining communication networks within their respective regions.

This proposal was suggested as an initial first step in establishing the communication process discussed with Dr. Perlin.